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President: Mr. Udovenko . . . . . (Ukraine)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 46 *(continued)*

Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/52/305)

Mr. Mahugu (Kenya): At the outset, Sir, I wish to join the previous speakers in commending you for the able manner in which you continue to preside over the work of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

My delegation would like to associate itself fully with the views expressed by the Permanent Representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this agenda item. I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report entitled "Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" (A/52/305), and we look forward to the report on poverty eradication (A/52/315).

The adoption of the Declaration and Programme of Action during the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen in March 1995, was a milestone towards the eradication of poverty, an increase in productive employment and the enhancement of social integration. The presence of so many world leaders at the Summit underscored the importance placed on social development.

My delegation fully supports the efforts made by the United Nations in facilitating the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. Kenya attaches great significance to the implementation of the Economic and Social Council's agreed conclusions on "Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows, investment and trade", as adopted at the Council's recent high-level segment. We urge the timely implementation of the Council's recommendations on the eradication of poverty. We welcome the notable steps undertaken so far by the functional commissions, in particular the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, in coordinating the implementation of the Council's recommendations on the multiyear programmes relating to poverty eradication.

In this context, the United Nations operational activities for development should be strengthened. We urge the United Nations Development Programme to continue coordinating efforts by the United Nations system towards capacity-building for social development programmes at the national level.

While social development and the implementation of the commitments made at Copenhagen are primarily the responsibility of Governments, international cooperation is essential to ensure the full implementation of these commitments. In this regard, Kenya underscores the importance of a partnership approach at the national, regional and international levels. In order to enhance full and effective implementation of the broad-based

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commitments of the Summit, there is an urgent need for the international donor community, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to provide the new and additional resources needed to finance the projects and programmes, particularly those designed to hasten the eradication of poverty.

As a follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, the Government of Kenya, in collaboration with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, has prepared a comprehensive policy framework paper outlining the development strategies during the current National Development Plan for the period 1997-2001. The paper is designed to enhance conditions conducive to sustained economic growth and development. These include: the maintenance of macroeconomic stability; the improvement of efficiency in the public sector; the promotion of the private sector as an effective engine of economic growth for development; and addressing the social aspects of development through targeted poverty interventions for the vulnerable groups.

I should like to conclude by reiterating the importance my Government attaches to the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action as agreed at the World Summit for Social Development. Towards this end, my delegation believes that without the timely and effective support of the international community, these efforts will have limited impact. Kenya therefore seeks the support of, and partnership with, the donor community, the private sector and the beneficiaries in enhancing the speedy implementation of the goals and objectives of the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit.

Mr. Valle (Brazil): It is with particular satisfaction that I take the floor on item 46, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". At the outset, I should like to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, as well as with the statement made by the representative of Paraguay, who spoke on behalf of the Rio Group.

It has now been more than two years since Heads of State or Government and representatives from all of our countries gathered in Copenhagen to deliberate about matters as essential to the future of humankind as the eradication of poverty, the expansion of productive employment and social integration. Since then, many things have happened at the international, regional and national levels that are conducive to the implementation of the decisions taken in Copenhagen.

The Secretary-General's report presents many examples of how different countries in different parts of the world are tackling the challenging issue of social development. Also, the report of the Secretary-General reflects the efforts that have been put forward by the United Nations system to comply with the recommendations contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

As I mention the Copenhagen Summit, it is only appropriate that at this stage I recall and recognize the important role of the Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Juan Somavía, a key player in this major endeavour ever since its inception, to whom we express our appreciation and gratitude.

Turning to the international sphere, I would like to point out the important work that has been carried out by the Commission for Social Development as the body within the Organization primarily responsible for follow-up and review of the implementation of the Summit's recommendations. In accordance with its multi-year programme, the Commission considered during its most recent session, in February this year, the key issue of productive employment. The Commission agreed that the expansion of full, productive, appropriately and adequately remunerated and freely chosen employment must be a central object of economic and social policies. Of equal importance will be the theme on which the Commission will focus its attention during its next meetings: the promotion of social integration and the participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons, in the benefits of social development.

At the regional level, it is with a great sense of accomplishment that I want to highlight the fact that the Latin American and Caribbean region has organized, through the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the first regional conference in follow-up to the World Summit, which Brazil was honoured to host in the city of Sao Paulo last April. This was a valuable opportunity for countries of the region to present reports on measures taken to implement the commitments made and to exchange views on how to proceed in order to attain the goals set forth in Copenhagen. The Sao Paulo Consensus adopted by the Conference renews the region's commitment to give priority to the issues on the social agenda, to incorporate

social equity into economic growth, to ensure the necessary allocation of resources to projects with a social impact, to strengthen cooperation with all sectors of civil society, to ensure an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development and to establish a regional database of successful social projects, among other goals.

While recognizing that international cooperation and assistance are essential for the full implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, my delegation is very well aware of the primary role that Governments and civil society must play at the national level towards the fulfilment of the objectives set forth. For Brazil, the generation of employment and income is an essential part of economic and social development. It is, above all, a major factor in the fight against poverty, which is one of the main concerns of the Brazilian Government. The economic stability experienced by Brazil since the introduction of the Real Plan has already contributed to the alleviation of the situation of a large portion of our poor people. We recognize, however, that important challenges remain before us, and we call for urgent action.

The State alone cannot meet all the challenges of equitable and sustainable development. The participation of all actors from civil society is much needed and greatly welcome. Taking into account the potential of civil-society organizations as agents of change and partners in development and poverty alleviation, the Brazilian Government has created an innovative mechanism, Comunidade Solidaria — Community in Solidarity — which constitutes a privileged space for building partnerships, for proposing new forms of joint ventures and for mobilizing people and institutions. Through Comunidade Solidaria, Government and civil society have joined to implement projects in areas such as professional training and income generation, food and nutrition, the reduction of infant mortality, primary education, basic sanitation and urban and rural development.

Comunidade Solidaria is a clear example of Brazil's belief that by joining forces it will be possible to build a better world for the future generations, a world free from the plagues of hunger, absolute poverty and social inequity, where human dignity and solidarity will prevail: the world that was envisaged by Heads of State or Government gathered at Copenhagen in 1995.

Mr. Takht-Ravanchi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The World Summit for Social Development was a manifestation of the continuing drive at the global level towards achieving a better common understanding of the various elements involved in the social development of modern societies. It was also the culmination of collective international efforts over the past several decades in that direction. The Summit deserves to be revisited here, albeit in a very general and succinct manner. As underlined in the opening paragraph of the Copenhagen Declaration, Heads of State or Government recognized the significance of social development and human well-being for all. Moreover, they committed themselves — and hence the countries they represented — to give to these goals the highest priority both at the time of the Summit and into the twenty-first century.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the social situation at the global level as the reason for convening the Summit, the Declaration reckoned that there existed an urgent need to address profound social problems, especially poverty, unemployment and social exclusion, and that our societies must respond more effectively to the material and spiritual needs of individuals, their families and their communities. The Declaration also reiterated that democracy and transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society are indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development, which were in turn considered to be predicated on peace, security and respect for human rights.

The Summit's future-oriented outlook, as reflected in the Declaration's principles and goals, was a commitment to a political, economic, ethical and spiritual vision for social development, which, in addition to the principles I have just referred to, called for full respect for the various religious and ethical values and cultural backgrounds of people. Within this overall conceptual construct, the Summit resolved to create a framework for policy and action at the national, regional and international levels geared to the promotion of social progress, justice and the betterment of the human condition.

What we all agreed to at Copenhagen, and what we all promised to undertake thereafter, was lofty by any standard. Now, almost three years after the Summit, we are here to assess the outcome of the Social Summit and to see, albeit in a preliminary manner, how it has been implemented. To this end, a report of the Secretary-General, contained in the document A/52/305, has been presented to the General Assembly at its current session; we find it find useful and appreciate it. The Secretary-

General's report indicates the wide range of activities and initiatives undertaken within the framework of the United Nations system or scheduled to take place in various fields and various forums.

The very fact that such an amount of activity and initiative is reported by the Secretary-General points to the system's degree of concern for and attention to the Summit's outcome, and is hence a cause for hope and optimism. While we look forward to the work of the Commission for Social Development at its upcoming thirty-sixth session and to the 1998 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, we await with great anticipation the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 and express our most sincere wishes for the success of the process leading to that special session — and, of course, for a much fuller implementation of the Summit outcome and a much better social situation the world over.

The annex to the Secretary-General's report, dealing with initiatives of national Governments on the follow-up to the Summit, is also a useful compendium of information. It shows how different Governments at various stages and levels of development have responded to the Summit's Declaration and Programme of Action. It is also indicative of the fact that quite a wide variety of Governments have taken the Summit's outcome seriously and have paid attention to the necessity to implement it. This too is a cause for hope and optimism.

Turning from the general to the specific, let me briefly touch upon our own national situation. As indicated in the annex to the report under consideration, Iran is among the 110 Governments which have reported on national actions in implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit and among the 40 Governments that have described in detail their national actions. A summary of Iran's activities appears in paragraph 22 of the annex to the report.

I would like simply to underline here that in response to the Summit's call, a national focal point for the eradication of poverty was designated in 1996. Moreover, a bill detailing an overall plan for the eradication of poverty has been drawn up by the Government and presented to the parliament for consideration and approval.

The summary of our national report, as reflected in the annex just referred to, can provide a glimpse of the Iranian Government's approach to social development. Available data on the indices of social development in various fields and areas, as reported by such United Nations agencies as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), among others, clearly attest to the Government's commitment to the betterment of the social situation in general, and to the poor and the disadvantaged in particular. General improvement over the past several years in most social indicators is also indicative of the overall success of the Government's efforts in this regard. In the aftermath of the recent presidential elections in Iran, we expect to see a higher degree of attention to and emphasis on social development, not only on the part of the Government but also through more pronounced popular participation by civil society.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the subject before the Assembly is indeed very important and so huge in extent that it defies satisfactory treatment in just the few minutes available. Much more remains unsaid, whether on policy and actions at the national level or at the regional and international levels.

Mr. Mangoaela (Lesotho): During the general debate, my Minister for Foreign Affairs had occasion to express his congratulations to you on your election. Today, I do this on behalf of the member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In doing so, I offer you their sincere congratulations on your election to the presidency of the fifty-second session of the General Assembly. Let me also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. We wish to assure you of the full cooperation of the SADC member States in the discharge of the heavy responsibility entrusted to you. We would also like to express our thanks to Ambassador Razali Ismail of Malaysia for the able manner in which he guided the work of the fifty-first session. SADC would also like to pay tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan for his deserved election as Secretary-General of the United Nations and for the skilful manner in which he is carrying out his responsibilities.

I have the honour to address this Assembly on agenda item 46, entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", on behalf of the SADC member States, namely: Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and my own country, Lesotho.

At the outset, SADC would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General on "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" (A/52/305) and his report on the "First United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty" (A/52/315).

As we turn yet another page after the historic adoption of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, we should ask ourselves whether there has been any change in the plight of the millions of people living in abject poverty, any employment creation or any favourable change in the international economic environment.

As we approach the five-year review and the new millennium, we regret that there has been no marked improvement of the situation of the world's poorest since Copenhagen. Regrettably, important initiatives before and after Copenhagen which could have accelerated the decisions taken there have not been implemented. And unfortunately there has been a steady increase in the number of people living in deplorably poor conditions. The world can never be a peaceful place as long as more than half of the world's populace is living in abject poverty.

The polarization between the "haves" and the "have nots" is increasing, threatening societies and world security. It is therefore imperative that social development should be a global priority. In Africa, for example, we have a lot of intra-State conflicts that have their roots in the scarcity of resources. The core issues of the Social Summit — poverty alleviation, employment generation and social integration — must therefore continue to be the main focus of the international community.

The southern African region is drought-prone. The high probability of the reoccurrence of drought in the 1997-1998 period due to the re-emergence of the El Niño phenomenon in the equatorial Pacific Ocean, and its adverse impact on food production, is of great concern to SADC. We therefore appeal to the United Nations and to the international community to respond generously to the drought situation in southern Africa in order to avert famine in the region, especially by supporting the region's drought preparedness and management strategies, through strengthening the capacity to deal with the situation, drought monitoring, and early warning preparedness. Appropriate assistance should also be extended to the SADC water sector, and to SADC member States, in order for them to advance further the implementation of the protocol on shared water course systems and preparedness for the SADC water sector round-table conference scheduled for October 1998.

For developing countries, particularly in Africa, poverty is aggravated by their debt burden, widespread unemployment, a deepening environmental crisis, the lack of adequate development aid and globalization, with its negative effects on trade for developing countries.

There is an urgent need to free developing countries from their debt burden — particularly the 33 sub-Saharan African countries which are classified among the least-developed countries. These countries need to rehabilitate their economic infrastructure and to fund social expenditure. Unfortunately, their scarce resources are used for debt payments. We reiterate the need for the international community, including the international financial institutions, to continue exploring ways of implementing additional and innovative measures to reduce the debt burden of developing countries, in particular the highly indebted low-income countries.

Globalization and liberalization are economic principles on which we all agree; however, they are not ends in themselves. The benefits of globalization and liberalization continue to elude people in the developing countries, especially in Africa. SADC member States believe that for globalization and liberalization of the world economy to benefit all countries, developing countries must have free access to world markets without any conditions.

The mobilization of new and additional financial resources that are both adequate and predictable is essential in order to implement the commitments made in Copenhagen, especially with regard to commitment 2 on the eradication of poverty. In this respect, SADC member States are encouraged by the continuous international partnership developing within the region. SADC calls for urgent fulfilment of the previously agreed United Nations targets of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of the developed countries for overall official development assistance, with 0.15 per cent to the least developed countries. Our developed partners should also strive to increase, as soon as possible, the share of funding for social development programmes, commensurate with the scope and scale of activities required to achieve the objectives and goals of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

We reiterate our commitment to the 20/20 initiative. Furthermore, we are aware that the Oslo consensus on the 20/20 initiative called for its review within two years. We are informed that preparations are progressing for the follow-up meeting next year in September. SADC countries are eagerly awaiting the outcome of this meeting, which would provide us with an opportunity to review how the compact has been implemented and to rededicate our commitment to it.

We accept that the primary responsibility for implementation of the Copenhagen outcome lies with national Governments. However, we believe that to achieve the objectives of the Copenhagen Declaration and the Programme of Action, Governments have to initiate their efforts with the support of the United Nations, the multilateral financial institutions, regional organizations and all actors in civil society.

The United Nations has a responsibility to facilitate the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. In this regard, we commend the action taken so far by the Economic and Social Council, the Commission for Social Development, other functional commissions, the United Nations Secretariat and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations. Of note is the United Nations Development Programme-supported project on social exclusion. We hope that the results of the study will be inculcated in the work of the funds and programmes to ensure that the anti-poverty strategies become more effective. Related to this, we wish to express our regret that the Economic Commission for Africa has not held a regional meeting at a high political level to review the progress made towards implementing the outcome of the Summit, as invited by the General Assembly in resolutions 50/161 and 51/202.

Furthermore, we regret that while a number of important initiatives have been launched, such as the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the System-wide Plan of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held under the auspices of the Government of Japan, which could have accelerated the decisions taken, the implementation of some of these initiatives is very slow.

We believe that for the developing countries to achieve any meaningful and lasting progress, the international economic situation should be conducive to development. It is imperative that international cooperation for development be strengthened. In our view, unregulated economic growth does not promote equity, employment or the sustainable use of natural resources. We are anxious that the growing globalization of the world economy might aggravate the unemployment situation unless precautions are taken. In our view, there is therefore a need to redirect the overall economic system towards putting sustainable human development at the centre if we are to implement commitment 3, made at the Summit, to promote

> "the goal of full employment as a basic priority of our economic and social policies". [Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, annex I]

Our national Governments are involved in the follow-up to the Summit. National policies on poverty have been formulated by some Governments in our region, while others have designated local focal points.

In conclusion, we wish to share information on some of the actions that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has taken to improve human development and meet the goals of the people in our region. These efforts were focused on poverty alleviation, employment expansion and social integration. SADC held a conference in Windhoek, Namibia, from 6 to 8 December 1996. The theme of the conference was "the private sector stake in southern African development". In this regard, we would like to thank the sponsors of the conference, which included the Governments of Japan and the United States. SADC regards the private sector as the engine of growth and development. In our view, the private sector holds the key to creating more jobs and generating income. The conference was held to enable southern African business leaders to interact more freely and exchange views and experiences with their Japanese and American counterparts.

SADC held another conference in Windhoek from 8 to 10 February 1997. The theme of that conference was "productivity: key to sustainable development in SADC". The conference was meant to afford Governments, the private sector and the labour movement an opportunity to exchange views and practical experiences so as to devise a common action plan to improve productivity in the SADC region, all towards implementing the conclusions of the Copenhagen Summit.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): I should like to begin by thanking the Secretary-General for his informative report (A/52/305) on this agenda item on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. Let me also express appreciation to Ambassador Mahmoud Jabir, of the United Republic of Tanzania, who spoke earlier on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and fully associate my delegation with that statement.

Two years ago the international community committed itself to addressing the imperative questions of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion. A pragmatic and feasible framework for action was agreed on, which was fully within the capacity of the Member States to achieve. Indonesia remains steadfastly committed to achieving those obligations assumed at Copenhagen and to realizing the substantial alleviation and eventual eradication of poverty in the near future.

We recognize that progress in social development has been made. Health care, education and general standards of living have risen for many people in recent decades. But too little progress is being made today for the more than a quarter of the developing countries' populations that continue to live in deprivation, poverty and misery. As we deliberate today, an estimated 1.3 billion people survive on less than the equivalent of $1 a day. Indeed, many do not survive. The benefits of globalization and the rapid advances in science and technology that have dramatically transformed international economics have yet to resolve the underlying problems of poverty, and in fact have driven many developing countries into marginalization. The poor become poorer and the gap between rich and poor grows wider.

While the primary responsibility for addressing these problems rests at national level, a responsibility that we in Indonesia willingly accept, it does not obviate the need for international assistance to developing nations, or for international cooperation in ensuring a stable, open and expanding global economy. As the developing countries strive to implement their social development policy, they should not at the same time be impoverished by a global economic system in which they have little voice. We need to act, and we need to act in genuine partnership in the knowledge that lifting the poor into sustainable development benefits the world economy at large.

If we are to seriously comply with the commitments made at the World Social Summit, then I am compelled to underline the imperative need to mobilize new and additional financial resources that are adequate and predictable. We must restore the commitment to official development assistance, on which most developing countries rely, but which is unfortunately in sharp decline, having now reached its lowest level since the adoption of targets over 25 years ago. This downward trend must be reversed and we must strive to meet the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) for overall official development assistance. At the same time, Indonesia supports convening an international conference on financing for development, which we believe would lend additional commitment to this important issue. Let me add that we found encouraging, and welcomed, the comments made by the European Union earlier today with regard to mobilizing resources for development, particularly towards the goal of 0.7 per cent of GNP official development assistance. Through partnership and cooperation we will all reap rewards.

I must say, however, that little progress will be made if for every step forward we take two back. A "once and for all" solution to the debt burdens that prevent many developing countries from directing adequate resources into social development must be made, and that a solution must be without conditionalities. In this regard, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank should be implemented, so as to assist the poorest countries in resuming economic growth and development.

I find it encouraging that following the World Summit the level of Government and public interest in the global employment situation increased substantially. As nearly one third of the global workforce is estimated to be unemployed, we must now move beyond expressions of interest and begin initiating measures for real progress. Ultimately, poverty will not be overcome in the absence of employment, employment cannot be created without economic expansion, and for the developing countries in today's world this demands international cooperation and support for their development goals. Therefore, while we look to the Secretary-General, within the framework of United Nations system-wide coordination, to broaden and deepen the policy debate on this issue, we must concurrently move forward with those agreements made in Copenhagen.

I believe it was timely that at its high-level segment last July the Economic and Social Council undertook a review of "Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows,

investment and trade". It is noteworthy that the agreed conclusions adopted by the Council indicated that an international enabling environment called for broadening and strengthening the participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making. Indonesia considers it essential that, as a multilateral, universal and democratic Organization, the United Nations should not see its centrality in the promotion of economic growth and development diminished; it is also essential that it play a guiding role in the management of globalization.

Within the United Nations we must continue to work to ensure that follow-up activities to the Summit are well-coordinated and harmonized with those agendas set by other international conferences for economic and social development. The Commission for Social Development, together with the Administrative Committee on Coordination, should ensure that such activities are appropriately integrated. In this connection, I welcome the new structure of the agenda and multi-year programme of work of the Commission for Social Development for the years 1997-2000, having the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development as its substantive theme.

In concluding, let me say that while Indonesia will continue to make comprehensive efforts at the national level to translate the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development into genuine social progress, we will also continue vigorously to advocate a fair and equitable position for the developing countries within the international community. We will continue to seek a consensus for development for all, and a dialogue for partnership that will evenly distribute the fruits of globalization. It is our sincere hope that when the United Nations conducts the overall review and appraisal of the Summit outcome in the year 2000 many of these goals, particularly those concerning poverty eradication, will have been met.

Ms. Romulus (Haiti) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I would like to stress that my delegation supports the statement made by the representative of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Aware of the range and complexity of the social problems facing the human race, especially poverty, unemployment, social inequality and social insecurity, Heads of State and Government committed themselves in Copenhagen in March 1995 to adopting national policies in the framework of the objectives of the World Summit for Social Development.

We ventured to hope that this will shown by the community of nations would usher in a new era of well-being for peoples.

Closer to home, the first regional conference on the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, held in São Paulo, Brazil, testified to the resolve of the region's leaders to take the measures required to attain the objectives agreed at Copenhagen in a spirit of solidarity.

My delegation would like to express its concern as to implementation of the commitments entered into at Copenhagen, namely, to improve our populations' standards of living. At the same time, I shall take this opportunity to describe the measures taken by my Government in this area.

Everyone knows how alarmed the people of Haiti were at the speed with which social structures were falling apart, given the period of crisis my country has just experienced — a period of uncertainty which caused a succession of problems for the economy and reputation of Haiti. We also have to recall that, because of the socio-political problems, unemployment has continued to rise, which further compounded the difficult economic situation of vulnerable groups in a country which already had a very disturbing level of unemployment.

To put an end to this vicious circle, despite all kinds of trials and tribulations, the Government of Haiti undertook to lead the nation on the path to the improved standard of living it had been awaiting for too long. The results are seen in the policy to combat poverty, create lasting foundations for the rule of law and freedom and tackle the structural causes of absolute poverty, which is the stark reality of the everyday life of three-quarters of the population of Haiti.

The programme to eliminate poverty will be backed up by a three-year economic programme to encourage renewed economic activity to generate employment, particularly for the most vulnerable sectors of the population. This reconstruction work, which has international backers, involves the establishment of a stable political and economic environment favouring renewed growth and the restoration of vital sectors such as education, health and the environment. The framework of the macro-economic policy for growth and human development was based on the clear needs of the people of Haiti and the United Nations resolutions in this area.

The Government of Haiti has placed particular emphasis on the development of national production; based on a concept put forward by our Head of State, Mr. René Préval, this is the guiding principle of Government action. The first phase of agricultural reform, launched by the Government on 1 May, has already borne fruit. The estimated yield of the land that was distributed is exceptionally good, significantly exceeding the average traditional yield of 2.8 metric tonnes per hectare. It is clear that this new experiment will have a significant economic, social and political impact over the short-, medium- and long- term.

At the economic level, we can expect a sharp increase in national production, which the Government has already set as our top priority. The communities benefiting from this will thus be equipped with what they need to face the test of the market and the enormous challenges of restructuring.

At the social level, experts foresee the emergence of a new category of people whose purchasing power will enable them to be fully integrated into national and international economic life.

On the question of health, the Government has undertaken to rationalize the current programmes carried on under the auspices of the Ministry of Public Health and Population and to replace the traditional vertical approach with a more effective, regionally integrated strategy based on providing a minimum service, estimated to cost 2 per cent of gross domestic product a year. Institutional reforms are under way to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Public Health and Population.

In this complex process of the profound transformation of all of Haitian society, education plays an active part by disseminating scientific and technical knowledge and raising the population's level of awareness. Everyone has a right to education.

In a society which is striving for development, illiteracy is an obstacle that must be overcome at any cost; that is a prerequisite for true social progress. Education is therefore the central concern of Haiti's leaders, as the necessary path to change and social progress.

"Literacy", the Secretary-General told us on International Literacy Day,

> "is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty and a building block of development, an essential complement to investment in roads, dams, clinics and factories."

Haiti's State department responsible for literacy, created a few years ago and directed by career educators, is doing outstanding work in the most remote areas of our country. There is no doubt that we must have a more human vision and begin thinking of those who have been left out, in order to develop their talents and creativity through education.

Time does not allow me to enumerate all the points of our Government's admittedly ambitious programme, which include the consolidation of peace and democracy, the preservation of our endangered environment, the fight against drugs, the promotion of human rights and, above all, the emergence of the Haitian people from abject poverty into a more human life of dignity.

Eliminating poverty, creating productive employment and achieving social integration are immense tasks that expand every day. Most fortunately, we were able to see during the general debate at the fifty-second session, a new approach, marked by greater respect for what is human, a policy of support for democracy and a desire for proper appreciation of human potential, the catalyst for development. This is encouraging and gives grounds for hope.

Haiti, while seeking its right road in the political, economic and social domains, reiterates its solidarity with the various United Nations initiatives to encourage the leaders of the world to alleviate the problems facing all the inhabitants of the planet.

Mr. Campbell (Ireland), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): The World Summit for Social Development was an important milestone in the history of the international community, and was universally recognized as a forum that made a major contribution to dealing with the acute social problems facing the human race.

At the same time, the proposed solutions require further implementation, and, indeed, adaptation to the realities of the economic situation. We think it important to improve on implementation of the commitments entered into by Governments, and to stimulate active

international cooperation and an exchange of positive experiences, in order to ensure full implementation. Equally important is the question of mobilizing financial resources in order to implement the Social Summit's Programme of Action.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report (A/52/305) made available to us under today's agenda item, "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development". The information and recommendations contained in the report are important and useful in aiding us to choose the best possible ways of dealing with the problems of productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, which are our priorities this year.

We learned with interest of the measures described in the report which have been applied recently by Member States, the Commission for Social Development and the United Nations Secretariat, as part of follow-up activities. They undoubtedly make a real contribution to implementing the goals set at the Copenhagen Summit. In this connection, we would like to express Kazakhstan's support for the efforts designed to further study and resolve problems at all levels.

The Government of Kazakhstan, for its part, is taking consistent steps towards implementing the commitments entered into at Copenhagen, particularly in the areas of productive employment and sustainable livelihoods.

Kazakhstan is committed to the ideal of renewal and is carrying out radical economic changes which are primarily designed to enhance the standard of living of our people. A solution to the problems facing us today will to a great extent help determine how effectively and consistently we are able to implement these measures in the future.

The Government of Kazakhstan is taking measures to radically reform and improve enterprises, achieve privatization, and strengthen the private and financial sectors. Unfortunately, as well as having a positive impact on the country's economy, these measures have led to a drop in employment levels, which remains a factor today. In this connection, the Government of Kazakhstan is carrying out comprehensive measures to improve entrepreneurship at the individual level, the family level and the micro and small business level. We are also organizing social works, primarily in housing and road construction. Recognizing the stabilizing role of small businesses in solving problems of productive employment, our Government is stepping up work in support of small enterprises at the State level, on the basis of decrees of the President, in order to develop a comprehensive programme in this area.

We are also trying to deal with the problem of financial support for small businesses and are establishing a fund for development. We are also establishing a system of benefits for small enterprises. In order to establish an appropriate legal foundation, the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted a law on State support for small business and on individual entrepreneurship. The question of State credit for small enterprises is taken into account in credit agreements between the Republic's National Bank and the international financial organizations of which Kazakhstan is a member. The Government of Kazakhstan is also adopting measures to support small businesses by stimulating their development, as a result of which the number of such businesses has risen to 150,000, and there has been a significant increase in the goods and services they produce.

Another factor in productive employment for our people is housing, which is essential.

The Republic of Kazakhstan has a development strategy which extends to the year 2030. The President recently made a statement to our people about this, establishing our basic priorities and directions for development over the short and longer term. One of the most important priorities is combating poverty and unemployment. The Government's basic efforts focus on micro-credit and developing small and medium-sized businesses; the high-priority development of labour-intensive sectors of our economy; actively attracting foreign investment and domestic capital; and strengthening the services sector.

In this connection, beginning in 1998 our Government plans to provide microcredit, primarily to those citizens most in need of it, both at the family level and at the level of small and medium-sized businesses, farmers and other sectors in which more jobs can be generated. We believe that those measures are in keeping with the recommendations contained in General Assembly resolutions 50/161 and 51/202, which stress the importance of encouraging national initiatives for social development, including credit and microcredit.

As our Republic has shifted to a market economy, we have seen the need to make radical changes in our earlier policies to provide social protection to our

population, set priorities for the transition period and work out a conceptual approach for the future. At present we are concentrating on measures of social protection focused on need, assisting those who for reasons beyond their control are unable to provide the basic minimum needs for themselves and their families. In order to do this, the Government of Kazakhstan has adopted a number of laws and other regulations setting forth specific measures and mechanisms for resolving the population's most urgent social problems.

At the same time, the root problem of reforming the social-support system for our people involves financing, and, given the limited resources available, the Republic faces the task of developing new social programmes in response to the changes in our society in order to try to preserve viable social-support systems for our people. Here we are confronted with serious social problems related to the large-scale ecological disasters in the Aral Sea region and around the former nuclear-test site at Semipalatinsk.

Kazakhstan's cooperation with international financial organizations and United Nations funds and programmes continues to provide us with assistance in implementing the Copenhagen Programme of Action. We appreciate the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in issuing the Republic's national report in the human development index. We are also grateful for assistance to women's programmes and for UNDP activities in microfinancing for individuals or self-employed persons or for the social integration of groups not otherwise covered under certain systems. For example, with UNDP support we have a programme to make microcredit available to women in one of our districts.

The delegation of Kazakhstan supports the conclusions of the Commission for Social Development as set forth in its resolution 34/2, which contains a set of agreed conclusions on productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, which are a part of the follow-up to the Social Summit. Kazakhstan fully supports the goals and principles of the Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

Given our concern for the well-being and standard of living of our peoples, these are the priority areas in which we in Kazakhstan are working and carrying out basic reforms while at the same time dealing with the problems created by the transition period. It would be unrealistic for us to expect a speedy attainment of our goals, but we believe that, against this background, active assistance from United Nations programmes and funds and from international financial institutions to countries whose economies are in transition will be extremely helpful for resolving problems and achieving goals in this area, including those we have set for ourselves in Kazakhstan.

Ms. Aponte de Zacklin (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): While fully endorsing the statement made by the delegation of Paraguay on behalf of the Rio Group, the delegation of Venezuela would like to raise a few points that are of interest to it from a national point of view.

From the time of the Copenhagen Summit to date, the international community has maintained an ongoing dialogue to promote social development. Today more than ever, we are united by the challenge of implementing the commitments made at Copenhagen within the overall framework of the indisputable ethical principles and values that underlie the Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development.

The threefold approach adopted at the Summit — to eradicate poverty in the world, promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority and achieve social integration — lies at the heart of the agendas of Member States. However, national, regional and international efforts have not yet succeeded in transforming the social situation of today's world, which is marked by major disparities in income and by the extreme poverty that affects the lives of billions of human beings.

We are aware that the issue of social development cannot be separated from the major transformations taking place today at the political, economic and cultural levels and that, therefore, any answers must be based on a realistic view of the social situation and the economic circumstances of development.

In this connection, if we are to overcome the disparities and well-known inequities in the distribution of the benefits of economic trends — liberalization at the national level and globalization at the international level — it is imperative that we reach a better understanding of those trends and muster the necessary political will to prevent such disparities and a possible marginalization of some countries in the world market.

Our country strongly supports all the activities in which the United Nations has been engaged to promote development, particularly the General Assembly's adoption in June 1997 of the Agenda for Development,

which, as the Secretary-General noted in his report on the work of the Organization, tackles not only the usual development issues but also

> "stresses the mutually supportive though complex relationships among development, peace, democracy, good governance and human rights." [A/52/1, para. 44]

We also consider, the strategies discussed at the session of the Economic and Social Council, on everything related to the mobilization of financial resources to strengthen national efforts to deal with poverty, to be of special interest for developing countries.

In recent years Venezuela has taken a series of steps designed to improve its abilities to manage social policies, promoting a comprehensive State-wide reform that incorporates elements to modernize the public sector and the decentralization and transfer of power to regional and local governments.

In April 1996 the President of the Republic, Mr. Rafael Caldera, announced a set of measures he felt were needed to ensure the country's stability during economic recovery. Thus, he introduced "Agenda Venezuela", which contained a comprehensive and coherent set of policies that include programmes of macroeconomic stabilization, institutional reforms, social benefits and productive restructuring.

The component of social benefits reflects the political will of the national Government to distribute the social burden of the adjustment programme among the entire population and to compensate those groups that tend to suffer the most from these types of measures. This is also part of the effort made by our Executive to follow up the commitments adopted at the World Summit for Social Development.

There are two main elements to this component. Those programmes are to be strengthened that are most likely to help the most destitute groups and that are already fully implemented, in order to avoid investing too much time in the design and creation of such programmes. Existing programmes are to be used that have proven to be effective in channelling resources to the neediest groups.

Agenda Venezuela contains a set of 14 social programmes involving direct food aid and financial assistance, as well as training to reintegrate people into the workforce, job creation programmes, food subsidies, medical help and others. While social policy of this kind should resolve the most serious priority problems, it should also help social development as a whole and teach the kind of behaviour that will lead to a life in greater dignity and in keeping with the needs of our times.

The most important aspect of Agenda Venezuela is the manner in which it addresses the social impact of economic measures. As our President recently said:

> "Our Government is socially aware and recognizes workers' demands for higher salaries to offset the rise of the cost of living."

In conclusion, I wish to say that Venezuela recognizes that change is most important for the present and future of the country. Through these processes, we are therefore attempting to enhance the basic concepts that will lead to the political, social and institutional modernization of Venezuela.

Mr. Jayanama (Thailand): On behalf of the Thai delegation, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, contained in document A/52/305. The report is an encouraging account of the significant progress achieved in the implementation of the commitments made at the Copenhagen Summit in 1995 by all involved, including national Governments, the Secretariat itself, the Economic and Social Council, regional commissions and other members of the United Nations system, including the World Bank, as well as civil society. While Thailand believes that social development and the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments are primarily the responsibility of national Governments, we recognize that international cooperation and assistance are essential for their full implementation.

My delegation believes that regional commissions in particular have a significant and catalytic role to play in reviewing national progress achieved and regional actions taken in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Copenhagen Summit. Thailand therefore welcomes the Fifth Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Social Development, which will be convened by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Manila from 5 to 11 November 1997. We look forward to participating actively in the exchange of experiences in national and regional progress in the implementation of the outcomes of the Copenhagen Summit and in the consideration of means of accelerating

the implementation of the regional agenda at the national and regional levels.

Last year in this Assembly, Thailand reported on its progress towards the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit, as contained in the current report of the Secretary-General. This year, we would like to take the opportunity to elaborate further on these efforts.

The accelerated economic growth Thailand has enjoyed in the past decade has not been without cost. Economic growth and material progress have not meant that all Thai people are enjoying proportionately greater wealth and a substantially improved quality of life. Rapid economic growth has also had certain negative effects on traditional Thai ways of life and societal values. The Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board therefore believes that development strategy should take into consideration the overall human impact.

Thailand therefore agrees with the importance of the people-centred approach to development put forward by the Copenhagen Summit, which emphasizes that development cannot be sustained in the long run if it is based only on purely physical economic growth, without due consideration of human and other social and environmental dimensions. In line with this thinking, Thailand has integrated the objectives of the Summit into our Eighth Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001), adjusting the development concept from a purely economic growth orientation to a people-centred development. Befitting this people-centred approach, the Plan was the result of collaborative efforts on behalf of the entire population of Thailand. Thai people from all walks of life and from various regions of the country played their part in drafting this Plan from its inception.

The Eighth Plan is a response to a national vision of Thai society, a vision which cuts across all aspects of human experience to provide a comprehensive picture of development as it should be. In this vision, people will develop themselves, their natural environment and economy, as well as improve good governance, to provide the highest sustainable level of well-being possible for all.

Thailand is committed to fulfilling this vision, whereby every Thai person should have greater opportunities to develop his or her full potential physically, spiritually and intellectually, and every Thai child should have adequate access to quality health care, with the assurance of good nutrition from birth, and access to at least 12 years of basic education. Young people, age 18 to 24, should have opportunities to participate in higher education. All disadvantaged people should have access to education and employment. All Thai citizens must have the opportunity to receive good quality basic social services. The Thai people should be better equipped to adapt to the changes brought about by rapid progress in science and technology, in order to cope more effectively with international competition. In addition to achieving sustained growth and stability without compromising environmental and social aspects, the Thai economy will provide job opportunities and more equitable income distribution among all groups of people in all regions of the country. The quality of life in the provinces and rural areas should not be inferior to that in the capital. Natural resources will be properly managed on a sustainable basis for the benefit of future generations of Thai people.

A few days ago, a new Thai Constitution, adopted in Parliament by an overwhelming majority, entered into force. Even more than the Eighth Development Plan, this Constitution was directly drafted by elected representatives of a balanced cross-section of Thai society. It should therefore strengthen and reinforce the Thai Government's plans to enhance social development. For instance, it focuses strongly on human rights and includes clauses against sexual, social or racial discrimination. For the first time in Thailand's history we have a Constitution which has a separate section on people's rights based on the general principle of preserving and promoting the rights and dignity of the individual. This provides a firm foundation for fulfilling our commitment to the promotion of social progress, justice and the betterment of the human condition.

As called for by the Copenhagen Summit, we agree that poverty eradication is of utmost concern to all countries. But for Thailand, the benefits of economic development have yet to be more evenly distributed across our society. From 1988 to 1996, the number of people living in poverty in Thailand decreased by 12 per cent. Yet those still living in poverty can become a source of social and economic disruption in our society.

We know from past experience that to alleviate poverty, close collaboration through a holistic people-centred approach by all actors of society is needed. Thus, the Thai Government, Thai civil society and the United Nations family in Thailand — including the World Bank — have jointly established the Thailand/United Nations Collaborative Action Plan, which is primarily a framework aimed at supporting the implementation of the decentralized, people-centred development objectives of

the Eighth Plan, in which the question of poverty alleviation is emphasized. In this regard, Thailand is committed to reaching the target of reducing the proportion of people living below the poverty line in Thailand to less than 5 per cent by the year 2020.

Within this joint initiative, the Royal Thai Government has called on the United Nations system in Thailand — including the World Bank — to collaborate on developing an action strategy for poverty alleviation. The Thai/United Nations Collaborative Action Plan strategy seeks to focus on a range of key opportunities available to government for addressing poverty and identifying practical solutions. The strategy also proposes the piloting of a few selected programmes which could be undertaken through the partnership of the Thailand/United Nations Collaborative Action Plan, involving government, the United Nations non-governmental organizations, the private business sector and academia working together.

The Action Strategy begins with measures representing a set of possible early priority interventions, including land title reform; a new agricultural development initiative and special agricultural economic zones; promotion of new manufacturing investment through relocation of labour-intensive industries to create industrial estates in the region; introduction of modern and appropriate technologies; marketing systems; and human resource development, including improved skills.

Based on an analysis of the situation of poverty in Thailand, and taking into account a few critical issues which are at the root of poverty, including such areas as lack of land security, severely limited access to essential resources and inputs, low opportunities for non-farm enterprises, and lack of basic education, skills and technologies, the action strategy proposes a focus on the following 10 key opportunity areas for addressing poverty in Thailand: building the capacities of people in communities to manage poverty-alleviation programmes; a bottom-up and participatory approach involving the active engagement of local people at each stage; removing remaining obstacles to the structural transformation of the economy; new agricultural technologies, agricultural parks and labour-intensive rural infrastructure; supporting small-business development and income-generation for the urban poor and for households that want to move out of agriculture; investment in labour-intensive manufacturing in or near rural areas; improvement of formal education; skill-development training; potable water; addressing issues of drug and human trafficking; enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of public assistance programmes; and increasing the level of public expenditures on poverty alleviation.

We believe that the Thailand/United Nations Collaborative Action Plan is a landmark partnership for people-centred development. Thailand would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to all involved in it, especially the United Nations system in Thailand, including the World Bank. We would also urge other developing countries to consider such a unique framework. We believe it could be an important model for development cooperation in the coming decade.

People-centred development and eradication of poverty are two vital elements of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit. The Summit called on all of us to define time-bound goals and targets for reducing overall poverty and eradicating absolute poverty. Thailand fully subscribes to this noble goal of the Summit and is trying its best to positively and efficiently answer this call.

Mr. Wilmot (Ghana): The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in August 1995, brought into sharp focus the profound nature of underdevelopment in the world and created a sense of urgency for mobilizing energies and resources at the national and international levels to implement strategies to eradicate poverty, promote full employment and foster social integration as a basic policy priority.

Indeed, since the beginning of this decade, each of the global conferences which have been organized under the auspices of the United Nations — from the Children's Summit, held in 1990, to the Conference on Human Settlements, held in Istanbul in 1996 — has drawn a link between its own central theme and the pervasive issue of poverty and how its structural causes are to be addressed. The agreements reached at these major conferences, and particularly at the World Summit for Social Development, now provide the basis for concerted and sustained action against poverty.

In December 1995 the General Assembly initiated a debate on the outcome of the World Summit. This is therefore the third time running that this item has been inscribed on our agenda, underlining the importance that we attach to the implementation of the outcome of the Conference. In this connection, my delegation fully endorses the statement made by the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China on this item. We also commend the Secretary-General for the

reports he has submitted to facilitate our discussion of the item.

My delegation is gratified by the measures which have been taken so far by the developing countries to implement their commitments under the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. We appreciate in particular the role played by civil society in sensitizing public opinion to follow-up activities to the Summit.

At the regional level, the Secretary-General's report, document A/52/305, informs us about the Conference held by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) in São Paulo in April 1997. Also proposed are meetings of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in November 1997 and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in February 1998 on the review of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit. We welcome these initiatives and call on the international community to lend full support to the implementation of the outcome of these meetings.

The developing countries, indeed, bear the primary responsibility for attaining the goals of the Conference. Individually they have to ensure equal access for all their citizens to resources and opportunities and undertake policies geared to a more equitable distribution of wealth and income. At the same time, the support of the international community — including the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, as well as other multilateral and bilateral donors — is required to complement the efforts of the developing countries.

It is in this respect that we note with gratification, in the Secretary-General's report (A/52/305), that with the implementation of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty in 1996 the United Nations has laid the groundwork for the observance of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, 1997-2006. We particularly note with appreciation that the ad hoc inter-agency task forces established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination provided coordinated assistance to developing countries in formulating or strengthening anti-poverty strategies and plans of action through the United Nations resident coordinators at the country level and with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Employment and adequate income are important factors in promoting social security. It is therefore distressing that more than a billion people in the world are either unemployed or underemployed.

The consideration of its priority theme for 1997, productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fifth session once more brought to the fore the inability of Governments in many developing countries to find productive employment for a rapidly growing labour force in the formal and informal sectors. For its part, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods has rightly identified high and productive levels of employment as the fundamental means of combating poverty and preserving social cohesion.

We therefore share the concern expressed in the Inter-Agency Task Force's report that employment strategies in countries that have embarked on structural adjustment programmes have been adversely affected by the need to control public spending and curb inflation. Clearly, there is an urgent need for the introduction of balanced priorities that would put employment growth at the centre of economic and social policy planning without neglecting other equally important objectives. This is the most effective way to translate into reality the objective of attaining full, productive and freely chosen employment.

In recent months the attention of Governments in the developing world has been focused also on the improvement of access to credit for the poor. The declaration adopted by the microcredit summit held in Washington in February 1997 marks a watershed in this domain and should be recognized as a bold initiative that could enhance the income-generating activities of the poorer segments of society, including artisans, self-employed traders, small farmers and women. We laud the increasing international awareness of microfinancing or microcredit as an efficient mechanism for providing financing for production to this category of citizens. Access to credits for these people would improve their businesses, empower them economically and thus free them from poverty. We therefore call on the developing countries to intensify their efforts in promoting the requisite institutions for microfinancing and the international community, including the international financial institutions, to lend the necessary complementary support.

We must not forget the aged and the disabled in any discussions on eradication of poverty. Employment opportunities for the disabled and productive activities for

the aged must form an integral part of any poverty eradication programme. In this connection we call for adequate preparations for the observance of the International Year of the Older Person in 1999.

Nor must we forget the needs of the youth. The youth are the future of the world. Therefore, the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond must be implemented with assiduity by all concerned. We look forward to the forthcoming world conference of ministers responsible for youth which is scheduled to take place in Portugal in August 1999, and we call for all possible assistance from the international community in making the conference a success.

Lastly, it bears emphasizing that all the instruments of development need to be brought to bear on the struggle to eradicate poverty from the world. The international economic system must be overhauled to enhance the trade prospects of the poor countries and to facilitate their access to science and technology, technical assistance and increased financial flows, both private and official. Above all, the poor countries need be freed from the crushing burden of external debt so as to enhance their financial capacity to implement their poverty eradication programmes.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): At the outset, I wish to associate my delegation with the statement made earlier by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and to join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for the report contained in document A/52/305. The report contains useful information on follow-up activities undertaken by Governments and by the United Nations system since the adoption of last year's General Assembly resolution on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. As described by the Secretary-General, there have been significant efforts on the part of the United Nations bodies engaged in the follow-up process to implement the provisions of the resolution and to consolidate joint activities.

My delegation wishes to highlight specifically the agreed conclusions on productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, adopted by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-sixth session and considered by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in July 1997. We also welcome the adoption by the Economic and Social Council of the resolution on poverty eradication as well as the agreed conclusions on the theme of fostering an enabling environment for development.

My delegation also commends the active participation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) in the Inter-Agency Task Force on Employment and Sustainable Livelihoods, and notes the important contribution of UNDP's MicroStart Pilot Programme, which provides institutional and capital support to microfinance institutions and networks in 25 pilot countries, thereby increasing access to financial services for poor people and micro-entrepreneurs. We were also interested to learn of the UNDP-supported project on social exclusion, and anticipate receiving the results of UNDP's current examination of the ways in which the analysis of exclusion could render anti-poverty strategies more effective. This, we feel, could be useful in informing next year's discussion of the Summit theme of social integration.

In terms of activities undertaken in the wider international arena, the micro-credit summit and the First Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, held in Brazil in April 1997, illustrate the commitment of States to ensuring the success of the follow-up process.

Jamaica, like other Member States, participated actively in the World Summit for Social Development and fully endorsed the fundamental principles embodied in the Copenhagen Declaration. We are fully conscious, however, that the true measure of our commitment must be demonstrated in concrete actions. In my own country, we have recently developed national policies on the aged, the disabled, youth and the family, thereby reflecting our commitment to the various international conventions to which Jamaica is a party and, consequently, to national development.

Turning to the issue of employment and sustainable livelihoods, Jamaica's philosophy on employment policy generally mirrors the provisions of the International Labour Organisation Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) and Employment Policy Recommendation, 1964 (No. 122). It is the aim of the Jamaican Government to develop adequate employment opportunities, matched by improvements in the skills and literacy of our human resources, recognizing that an effectively trained, adaptable and flexible work force is critical if we are to meet the demands of the economy. The Jamaican Government has therefore undertaken

several initiatives aimed at providing entry-level and informal training opportunities, primarily for youth, the poor and the unemployed, to prepare them for gainful employment. At the tertiary level, new programmes of training have been introduced in response to the demands of the labour market.

The people and Government of Jamaica have long recognized that small businesses, which incorporate small-scale enterprises, micro-enterprises and cooperatives, have the potential to create jobs, utilize local raw materials and involve large numbers of people in national decision-making and social and economic development. In Jamaica, this sector employs more than 22 per cent of the employed labour force, more than 50 per cent of whom are women. Nevertheless, the sector's full potential, in terms of employment and income generation, has yet to be realized. It is therefore the goal of the Government to act as a catalyst to improve the sector.

The Jamaican Government is also working with key actors in this sector on the provision of capital for the sector's expansion, and has been greatly assisted in this venture by several bilateral and multilateral donors.

We believe that it is necessary to transform the informal sector from a low-income, subsistence-level one to an economically viable one, as this is central to attaining the goals of full employment and sustainable livelihood and, consequently, the eradication of poverty.

We cannot overemphasize the vulnerability of the economies of small States such as those in our subregion. Caribbean economies remain severely hampered by the external debt burden, unfavourable terms of trade, narrow resource bases and the threat posed by international drug trafficking, among other factors. In this connection, it has long been recognized that there is a correspondingly urgent need for the mobilization of resources to assist national and international social development programmes.

We therefore note with interest the Secretary-General's report on new and innovative ideas for generating funds for globally agreed commitments and priorities, which was presented to the Economic and Social Council in July 1997.

Jamaica wishes to reiterate its appreciation to the relevant agencies of the United Nations system for their responsiveness to the various Government initiatives in the area of social development. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), to name but a few, have all participated strategically in national consultations and have made both financial and human resources available to the Government of Jamaica.

The Jamaican Government remains firmly committed to the implementation of the Summit commitments. We look forward to continued dialogue with our partners in the international arena on ways and means of achieving global solutions to the myriad of problems which we face in the area of social development.

Mr. Aass (Norway): The World Summit for Social Development acknowledged the close interlinkages that exist between aspects of development, in particular between the social and economic dimensions. The Summit further emphasized the need to pursue the core objectives of poverty eradication, productive employment and social integration in a comprehensive manner.

The Copenhagen Summit also reaffirmed that the most productive policies and investments, in both economic and social terms, are those that empower people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities. At the Summit, world leaders stated their commitment to promote people-centred development, based on the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The responsibility for implementing the Summit recommendations rests primarily at the national level, but international cooperation is essential for their full implementation, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries.

The United Nations system has an important role to play in the follow-up to the Summit, in particular in providing support for action at the national level. Norway would like to reiterate that it is crucial that this task be conducted in an integrated manner and that follow-up to the Social Summit be coordinated with the follow-up of the other major United Nations conferences of this decade, in particular those at Rio, Vienna, Cairo and Beijing.

In our joint efforts to follow up the Summit recommendations, Norway has taken a special interest in promoting the goal of universal access to basic social services, which is central to all three core objectives of the Summit. Not only do basic health and education produce invaluable individual and social benefits, both

are essential for sustainable economic development and constitute an investment in people's hope for the future.

The Programme of Action of the Social Summit underlines universal access to basic education as an important means to combat child labour. Children should be at school, not at work, but the latter is, unfortunately, the reality for millions of children in today's world.

Work at an early age is a serious problem, not only because child labour is often performed under exploitative and hazardous conditions, but also because it interferes with the child's emotional, educational and social development. Conditions surrounding child labour frequently constitute serious violations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Norway sees child labour as a human rights issue as well as a development issue, and has therefore made the fight against child labour a priority issue for development cooperation.

There is a growing consensus that the elimination of child labour requires specific policies targeting working children and adolescents, including major efforts to increase the accessibility, quality and affordability of primary education. Policies aimed at making education a viable and rewarding option for all children are urgently needed. Norway will continue to support activities to make education for all a reality, as education is also one of the most forceful measures to combat child labour.

To improve cooperation between actors at different levels fighting against child labour, Norway is convening an international conference at Oslo, from 27 to 30 October. The objective of the Oslo conference is to identify strategies at the national, regional and international levels for the elimination of child labour, with a special focus on the role of development cooperation. It is our hope that the countries invited to the conference will agree upon an agenda for action committing them to fight against child labour.

The Social Summit took an important step towards the goal of universal access to basic social services by urging interested countries to implement the 20/20 initiative. The Governments and multilateral organizations that met at Oslo in April 1996 brought the initiative closer to reality by adopting the Oslo Consensus, which reaffirmed that investing in a country's human resources, in particular in women and children, means investing in the future and is thus fundamental to realizing the full potential for social and economic development. Promoting access for all to basic social services is essential for sustainable development and should be an integral part of any strategy to overcome poverty. The 20/20 initiative should be a tool for developing countries and their partners wanting jointly to give higher priority to basic social services.

The participants in the Oslo meeting agreed that a follow-up meeting should be held within two years to exchange information and experiences and to review and assess progress in implementing the 20/20 initiative. For its part, Norway took on the responsibility to ensure that such a follow-up meeting would take place, and I am pleased to announce that a small working group with representatives from developed and developing countries and from multilateral organizations has now been established to prepare for this Oslo+2 meeting. The Government of Viet Nam has kindly offered to host the event during the second half of 1998, and several United Nations agencies are actively participating in the process, *inter alia* by organizing studies of the status of 20/20 at country level. The United Nations Children's Fund has taken on special responsibility for the practical preparations. It is our hope that the Oslo+2 meeting will demonstrate a growing interest in the initiative, and that the meeting will be able to review concrete efforts to translate the Oslo Consensus into practical action in a number of countries.

In addition to a mutual commitment along the lines of the 20/20 initiative, another long-standing target needs a reaffirmed commitment by developed countries. I am speaking of the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance. Were that target to be reached, it would more than double the amount available to finance development and would thus significantly increase our chances of achieving the objectives set by the Social Summit.

Before concluding, I would like to welcome the decision made by the Economic and Social Council earlier this year to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability for another three years. Norway has been and will continue to be a strong supporter, in both political and financial terms, of the function of the Special Rapporteur. Enabling and encouraging people with disabilities to participate actively in and make their full contribution to society must be an integral part of our efforts to create a society for all, in the true spirit of the Copenhagen Summit.

Mr. Martini Herrera (Guatemala) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Guatemala. I wish first of all to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development.

Central America has made a notable effort to implement the commitments undertaken at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development. It has done this at the national level by formulating and implementing local and community development policies, and at the regional level by setting out sectoral strategies in the context of the Treaty on Central American Social Integration, which stemmed from the Central American social summit. That 1995 instrument, in force since May 1996, set out joint commitments in the area of social development. It has led to the implementation of administrative measures and provisions, and to the formulation of social policies to carry out those commitments.

Tackling the social challenges in a region such as Central America, which is beleaguered by social clashes, has required Central American Governments to demonstrate the firm determination to do all they can to implement effective social policies and programmes that, most important, will provide greater coverage for the most vulnerable social groups. This political will of our Governments is reflected in their consistent support for development projects that involve these elements.

Central America is optimistic about developments in the social sphere in recent months, such as the micro-credit summit in Washington, whose conclusions and results will play a strategic role in the resolute struggle against extreme poverty.

At its 1997 substantive session, the Economic and Social Council considered an item entitled "Fostering an enabling environment for development — financial flows, including capital flows; investment; trade". We welcome the agreed conclusions recommended in that context. We are pleased that we thus have a framework for international cooperation, for national policies and for the role of the United Nations system, all of which should, in our view, be strengthened to promote sustainable development and the elimination of the marginalization that many developing countries are facing.

The Economic and Social Council also decided to consider globally the issue of poverty eradication for the purpose of contributing to the special session which the General Assembly intends to hold in the year 2000 in order to conduct a general review of the World Summit on Social Development and the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. In our view, this issue is of utmost importance, and Central America is particularly interested in it. It is the main reason why the Governments of the area are currently making efforts in the context of what is known as the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America. This mechanism is intended to promote the regional policy of comprehensive and social development, in which the creation of jobs and income-producing activities represents an essential element with a direct impact on the fight against poverty.

It is also encouraging that the Latin American and Caribbean region has held, through the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the First Regional Conference in follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. At that Conference, an effort was made to consider the activities conducted by countries of the region, to formulate recommendations to its Governments, to promote regional and subregional cooperation and to make available a forum for the exchange of information.

The signing in 1995 of the Treaty on Central American Social Integration led to the creation of the Central American Integration System (SICA), thus establishing the main objectives of the Central American social subsystem. The framework of this subsystem provides for the implementation and coordination of social policies at a regional level and promotes unified action in international aid for Central America in the areas of education, health, housing, urban and rural development, and so on.

The Nicaragua Declaration, signed one and a half months ago, strengthened the process of regional integration and laid the foundation for a possible political unification of the Central American countries, and it further enhanced Central American social, economic and trade policy. Among the key objectives of this policy are the sustainable development of the region, based on overcoming poverty, and the participation of organized civil society and the population in general, as well as environmental preservation and the rational and sustainable use of natural resources.

At its thirty-fifth session, the Commission for Social Development considered the priority item of productive employment and sustainable livelihood and recommended

that the importance of increasing the job growth rate be emphasized. In our view, this must go hand in hand with striking a balance between multiplying the number of jobs and diversifying the economic activities which are compatible with the realities of our region as a region of developing countries.

Unemployment is one of the most serious problems facing the Central American region. This, given the even more generalized problem of underemployment added to inadequate productivity and low remuneration, is the main cause of poverty. Thus it becomes increasingly necessary to broaden to the greatest extent possible the quality and accessibility of social services, especially education and public health, in order to increase employment and improve the well-being of our people. These goals require an increase in economic growth and social cooperation at the international level.

Really sustainable development must be based on the eradication of poverty, on the participation of the entire civil society, on the creation of jobs, on the protection and improvement of the social and environmental climate and on the strengthening of the social-management ability of local governments. These challenges impose on all Governments the responsibility to continue to make efforts to implement fully the commitments they have made towards their own societies as well as the commitments adopted at the World Summit for Social Development.

The Acting President: I now call on the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): The 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen provided the international community with an invaluable opportunity to put into practice the concept of human-centred development as a means of enhancing the welfare of the human community. Indeed, it reaffirmed the principle that development and social justice are indispensable for achieving and maintaining world peace and security.

The Summit mobilized the world leaders to tackle social issues with the aim of building a new society where human rights and social development are enjoyed to the fullest extent by all human beings. It is imperative that social development continues to enjoy high priority among the policy initiatives of national Governments and of global society as a whole. Clearly, any action at the global level calls for a multi-faceted approach among national Governments, the United Nations and civil society.

In this context, my delegation notes with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/305 detailing the progress made so far. The information contained therein on the follow-up efforts of national Governments, the United Nations system and civil society provides new impetus and direction in preparing for the "Copenhagen+5" special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000.

Commitment 3 of the Copenhagen Declaration reaffirmed our resolve to promote full employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies. However, we are presently faced with a grim picture of global unemployment. According to estimates of the International Labour Organization (ILO), almost one billion people are either out of work or underemployed.

Last March the thirty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development closely studied and actively discussed, as a priority theme, productive employment and sustainable livelihoods. We fully support the Commission's agreed conclusions calling upon Governments to set time-bound goals for expanding employment and reducing unemployment. As those conclusions emphasized, productive employment requires international, mutually reinforcing economic growth and social cooperation and should be bolstered by balanced macro-economic policies lest other important goals, including inflation containment and financial stability, be displaced.

Drawing upon Korea's own experience of the process of economic and social development, my delegation would like to touch briefly on some aspects of productive employment, particularly as it relates to the developing world. First, the expansion of small-scale, labour-intensive industries should be encouraged. This can be accomplished through the promotion of public investment and by redistributing income to poorer sectors of society, whose demand for consumer goods is coincidentally less import-intensive and more labour-intensive than those at higher income levels. In doing so, effective labour-intensive manufacturing technologies must be identified by supporting indigenous technological research and adaptation capacities. As an initial step, the development of low-cost, labour-intensive methods to meet rural infrastructure needs could be pursued.

Secondly, education must be more closely linked to employment. Clearly, education is vital to the promotion of productive employment. However, it may be more

feasible to develop and implement educational strategies in the context of rural development.

Resolution 51/202, adopted by the General Assembly last year, called upon all participating Governments, as agreed at the Copenhagen Summit, to work towards achieving within their national contexts a series of paramount objectives spelled out in the Programme of Action.

Since the Summit, the Korean Government has developed various follow-up measures to the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. At the national level, the Social Welfare Law entered into force in June 1996, and the Social Welfare Council, headed by the Prime Minister, was established in November last year to provide direction for future welfare policies as well as to enhance coordination among relevant ministries.

As the recipient last year of the first Franklin Delano Roosevelt International Disability Award from the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, my Government has been pursuing vigorously the goal of full participation and equality for the more than 1 million disabled persons in Korea. In that spirit, a five-year welfare development plan for disabled persons was recently put in place.

With the conviction that the social integration of older persons is a pressing moral imperative, we enacted last August the Older Persons Welfare Law to further extend the sphere of welfare benefits to senior citizens. We have also developed proactive employment guidelines for employers to promote employment opportunities for the elderly, and many companies have already begun to participate in this very worthwhile initiative.

Turning now to follow-up measures to the commitment to international cooperation made by my delegation during the Summit, we wish to take this opportunity to reaffirm our pledge to actively undertake all efforts to that end.

Despite the trend of an overall decline in official development assistance at the global level, my Government has substantially increased the scale of its official development assistance — in particular, grant-type aid — by 30 per cent this year, and will do its utmost to maintain this course in the future, despite our lagging economy at present.

We have given careful consideration to the unabated plight of the least developed countries. As a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's initiative, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, my Government has participated in bilateral cooperation efforts with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and plans to undertake a programme for the development of Africa for the period 1998-2000.

Since our President's announcement, at the World Summit for Social Development, of Korea's plan to provide technical training to some 30,000 people from developing countries by the year 2010, we have already — between 1995 and 1997 — carried out training programmes for approximately 3,200 people. We intend to invite around 1,500 people next year, and will continue to increase the number of trainees substantially in the coming years. Next year will see the completion of the International Training Centre, whose aim will be to enhance and further consolidate these training programmes.

In September of this year, the Korean Government hosted in Seoul a meeting organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to mark the mid-point of the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002. That meeting reaffirmed our commitment to the full implementation of the agenda of the Asian and Pacific Decade. Youth issues are also a primary concern to my Government. Building upon the success of the Global Youth Forum held in 1995, and as a follow-up to the Social Summit, Korea is setting up an international youth exchange centre, designed to promote youth exchange programmes and friendship.

The role of non-governmental organizations has been continuously strengthened in the field of social issues. Their active participation in the policy-making process, as well as in the stages of implementation, has helped complement governmental efforts to translate the Declaration and Programme of Action into tangible realities. Their role as so-called "watchdogs", and their contribution at the grassroots level to raising public awareness, as well as to promoting fund-raising, has become an integral part of the common effort to address social issues. We look forward to the further strengthening of the tripartite partnership among non-governmental organizations, national Governments and the United Nations system.

In closing, I would like to emphasize that the process of social development requires not only improvement in a materialistic sense but also meaningful progress in terms of democratization and governance.

Full respect for human rights; the rule of law; gender equality; respect for ethnicity, religion and diversity; and participation in free and fair democratic elections — these are the basic ingredients for human-centred development. Social development in its purest sense can only become a reality when human rights and fundamental freedoms are wholly guaranteed.

Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like at the outset to endorse the statement made by the delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The World Summit for Social Development had the virtue of strengthening the recognition of the human being as the subject and end of any development strategy or policy at the national as well as global level. However, that was only the beginning of a long and hard road.

Some 1.3 billion people still live below the poverty line, and every day 68,000 more are added to the number of those living in absolute poverty. Some 13 million children die of hunger every year — that is, 35,000 every day; 507 million people will not live to the age of 40; 1.2 billion people lack access to drinking-water; and 842 million adults are illiterate. Most of these millions of people live in developing countries. There are still innumerable obstacles to social development, many of them structural, but such development is both necessary and feasible, if we want to live in a politically and socially stable world.

My delegation shares the concerns about the world's employment problem expressed by the Secretary-General in his report [A/52/305]. Inequalities in the distribution of wealth at the global, national and local levels have continued to multiply at an alarming rate. Special mention should be made of the difficulties of mobilizing international resources for development, which must be conceived of as a comprehensive process involving economic and social factors. Official development assistance is below the goal of 0.7 per cent of the gross domestic product of the developed donor countries, and all the signs point to a continued downward trend in the next few years. By contrast, those countries allocate approximately 3 per cent to military expenditure, which is inconceivable in the light of the end of the cold war.

Official development assistance can be supplemented by other ways of mobilizing resources, but it together with changes to the current international economic order, must continue to be the main element of a strategy for development.

The burden of external debt continues to suffocate a sizeable group of developing countries. The proposed remedies are often accompanied by the imposition of reform and structural adjustment programmes whose adverse effects upon the populations of debtor countries have contributed to explosive social situations in those countries. The globalization of the economy and the impetus of neo-liberalism move us daily further away from the lofty goals of social justice contained in the commitments made at Copenhagen.

African countries and those described as least developed still need special attention. For this group of nations, recent developments have been very negative.

Political will is still the key to changing the bleak outlook, which we must deal with. The resources are there but they are squandered on unrestrained consumerism and the arms race. If we do not create an international environment favourable to economic growth and sustainable and comprehensive development, it will be almost impossible, particularly for the large majority of third world countries, to make steady progress along the road to social development.

I wish to acknowledge the results of the system-wide coordination of efforts to follow up the Copenhagen Summit. We hope that even more can be done.

Cuba was particularly honoured to take part in the First Regional Conference in Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean in São Paulo last April, and welcomed the reaffirmation of our commitments.

In the last three decades Cuba has drawn up and implemented, with significant results, development policies and strategies based on a fairer and more equitable distribution of wealth. Achievements of this policy include the following: 100 per cent of our population has access to free health and education services; life expectancy at birth is now over 75 years; 97.5 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 14 are attending school; the infant mortality rate is 7.9 per 1,000 live births; and 100 per cent of all Cuban children are vaccinated against 11 preventable diseases.

The sudden ending of external economic relations focused mainly on Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, together with the stepping up of the United States Government's blockade against Cuba, has presented my Covernment with new and greater challenges in implementing its social development policy. However, the infrastructure created over the last 37 years, the social protection policies we have implemented, and the creativity and participation of the people in this endeavour have allowed Cuba not just to defend its main social successes but also in many cases to improve on them.

The fact that we have managed to defend the most important social benefits in decades, in such difficult and unusual conditions, strengthens the thesis that in a framework of social justice and an equitable distribution of wealth, certain basic goals of social development can be reached in situations where economic growth is limited, even negative. We have also shown that even when management mechanisms are more decentralized, the State can retain its ability to guide and regulate social policy as a way of guaranteeing a comprehensive and durable social policy.

My country continues to be ready to share its experiences in this area and take an active part in any effort by the international community to encourage implementation of the commitments entered into at the Copenhagen Summit.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): First of all, like many others, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made earlier this morning by the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mongolia attaches great importance to the Assembly's consideration of this agenda item, entitled "Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development".

The peaceful advance of humankind and its secure livelihood can no longer be sustained in a world impregnated by abject poverty, an external debt burden, a growing technological and economic gap between the rich and the poor, widespread hunger and malnutrition, violence and discrimination, drugs and infectious diseases, and so on.

Mindful of the urgent need adequately to address these problems, the international community in the early 1990s took various actions, including the organization of a series of world Summits and conferences, and the proclamation and observation of United Nations decades and international years on specific social issues and target groups.

The agreements reached at these conferences form a strong basis for development cooperation and for the future role of the United Nations in these areas. It should be pointed out that development cooperation has been given people-centred, sustainable, gender-sensitive and social dimensions.

In order to consolidate a basis for development cooperation, all have come to the realization that we all depend on one another for sustainable development and progress. Coordination of policies and joint decision-making at the global level are required if we wish to move closer to the aim of securing a life of dignity for humankind, now and in the future. Effective action to realize the undertakings agreed upon require both the means and a streamlining of efforts and activities.

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development envisage both national and international developmental efforts, recognizing that while social development remains a national responsibility, the support, collective commitment and efforts of the international community are essential for achieving the goals set forth in Copenhagen.

Mongolia welcome the Secretary-General's report entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" (A/52/305), which contains rich, useful and quite revealing information on the implementation of the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit. It is gratifying to note the growing initiatives undertaken at the national, regional and international levels.

The micro-credit summit held last February and attended by representatives from 137 countries, including Mongolia, recognized — and practice has confirmed — that building institutions capable of providing micro-finance services is a viable strategy to eradicate poverty and promote small businesses.

Mongolia strongly believes that the implementation of the Summit decisions calls for serious political commitment on the part of the international community to substantially increase resources for sustainable human development.

Mongolia also welcomes the 1997 Report on the World Social Situation, prepared by the former United Nations Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy, the first report after the Copenhagen Summit. Its coverage of outstanding social issues is broad and extensive, providing a clear picture of the world social situation.

The Government of Mongolia considers that one practical way to raise the living standards of a population and reduce poverty is to increase employment opportunities. Therefore, the Government is actively pursuing a policy of human-resource development. The Mongolian National Programme on Poverty Alleviation (NPPA), referred to in the Secretary-General's report, was launched in 1994. Its major aim is to promote employment and income-generation opportunities, especially in rural areas and among disadvantaged women, create social safety nets for the poor and seek incorporation of poverty-alleviation goals in all aspects of policy-making. The NPPA is carried out in conjunction with the Population Policy of Mongolia and the National Programme of Advancement of Women, and is also assisted by a national programme on employment generation.

The overall aim of the NPPA is to reduce the number of people in poverty from 26 per cent of the population to 10 per cent by the year 2000. It focuses on strengthening the institutional capacities of the Government at both central and local levels, policy management and poverty monitoring, promoting human resources development through providing better access to health and education opportunities, alleviating rural poverty, good governance and developing and strengthening the basic social safety net.

The Government of Mongolia is committed to pursuing this policy by allocating 20 per cent of its annual budget, as well as 20 per cent of all foreign aid and assistance, to social development activities by adopting the 20/20 formula agreed at the Social Summit. At the same time, the Government is working to create the conditions for everyone to complete education and training, as well as to ensure that those engaged in productive labour receive sufficient social guarantees to meet their health and other requirements. The Government intends to meet these goals by the year 2000.

Mongolia is aware that without visible socio-economic progress, the process of democratization, especially when it is carried out simultaneously with economic transition, as is the case with Mongolia, can face the difficult challenges of social instability. Following the micro-credit summit, the Government organized, late last June, a national forum on small credits which discussed the ways in which the poor and disadvantaged can be given greater access to productive assets and resources.

The Mongolian Human Development Report was launched recently in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, which identified and established the social benchmarks against which actions aimed at social development can be assessed. This report is the first assessment of Mongolia's human-development situation. All national development efforts need a vision — a focal point to make coordinated and sustained improvements — supported by political will, the participation of the people and solid organizational and financial backing.

I would like to underline that Mongolia's interaction with the United Nations, its agencies and other international organizations and our bilateral cooperation with Member States, have played, and continue to play, a valuable role in overcoming underdevelopment and the hardships inherent to a transitional period, as well as meeting our pressing socio-economic challenges. In this connection, I would like to express the gratitude of my Government to the donor countries, the United Nations and other international institutions for their continued support and assistance extended to my country.

In conclusion, I wish to express my delegation's sincere hope that the ongoing deliberations on the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit will help generate renewed political will at the national, regional and international levels to attain the noble objectives of sustainable human development.

Ms. Hall (United States of America): The United States delegation is pleased with this opportunity for the General Assembly to meet again to take stock of the progress the international community has made in implementing the commitments made in 1995 at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, and to share the lessons we have learned in doing so. The task before us at that time was indeed a daunting challenge: to formulate ways and identify means to eradicate absolute poverty, create jobs and empower women and men, especially older persons and people with disabilities, to become full participants in their societies.

I want to share with the Assembly the good news. Although many challenges remain and there is much more hard work ahead of us, we have indeed, in our national programmes and multilateral efforts, made progress in addressing these compelling issues. Our work has been greatly facilitated by the participation of non-governmental organizations that have helped identify issues, develop solutions and implement programmes worldwide. We want to continue the close cooperation between governmental and non-governmental actors as we continue our work.

We commend the contribution to this work by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which stands at the centre of a coordinated international effort to eradicate poverty. Other United Nations funding agencies also have important roles to play, including the International Fund for Agricultural Development, with its focus on rural poverty; the United Nations Population Fund, with its focus on women, reproductive health and family planning; the United Nations Development Fund for Women, wit its emphasis on women's empowerment; the United Nations Children's Fund, with its focus on children and the girl-child; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with its support for refugees; and the World Food Programme, which provides large-scale support in both emergency and non-emergency situations. Those organizations, along with national and international civil society, have formed key partnerships to address this most urgent problem.

In the United States, we have raised the minimum wage, expanded tax credits for working families and reduced the federal deficit, all of which provide the basis for investment, growth and job creation. The lesson we have learned is that a flexible job market that facilitates mobility, an economy open to competition and sound monetary and fiscal policies implemented by a Government that is representative, transparent and accountable, all contribute to the creation of jobs.

As we create these jobs and expand our economies, we need to ensure that all members of our societies participate in and enjoy the benefits of job creation and economic growth. In many societies, still too many women, youths, the elderly and people with disabilities have been consigned to the margins of society. We simply cannot afford to waste the contributions of so many who have so much to offer. Our piece of legislation known as the Americans with Disabilities Act has taken great strides to break down barriers to persons with disabilities. We look forward to sharing our experiences in this area and to learning from the experiences of others.

I want to express my delegation's appreciation for the work of Mr. Bengt Lindqvist, the Special Rapporteur on disabilities, in helping us focus not only on how we meet the needs of persons with disabilities, but also on how we can ensure that those with disabilities can achieve their potential, realize their dreams and become fully integrated members of our societies. We fully support the continuation of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur.

I also want to express appreciation for the work of the ad hoc informal open-ended support group established by the Commission for Social Development to prepare for the International Year of Older Persons and the non-governmental organization Committee on Ageing. The theme for the Year — Towards a Society for all Ages — not only reminds us of the importance of older persons in our social fabric but highlights the truth that open societies — those that offer all citizens access to education, health care, productive employment and freedom from discrimination — are providing a benefit to their members across the entire life span.

I want to reiterate a theme put forth by my delegation in the Third Committee earlier this week. At that meeting we pointed out that, in this year when there has been so much discussion of reform, we must not lose sight of the reasons for which we are undertaking these sometimes difficult efforts. Quite simply, it is because of the vital importance of addressing social and economic issues, such as those that continue to concern many families, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities around the world, that we committed ourselves to at the World Summit for Social Development.

We look forward to the special session of the General Assembly in the year 2000 to review the status of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development. Such special sessions revitalize and refocus the General Assembly. We see the special session as a timely opportunity to exchange experiences with other delegations with a view to implementing programmes that may work in our own countries to advance social development, enhance social integration and provide basic social services for all. We look forward to this opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the commitments we made in Copenhagen.

Mr. Saliba (Malta): Malta joins other delegations in thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development (A/52/305). We welcome the various activities being undertaken by Governments, regional

organizations and the United Nations system in fulfilment of the goals and commitments made at Copenhagen two years ago, commitments which are acknowledged to be primarily the responsibility of Governments but which can only be fully realized through international cooperation and support.

The efforts undertaken so far by the Economic and Social Council, funds and programmes and the Commission for Social Development in follow-up to the Summit are encouraging. Collaboration and coordination among the various United Nations bodies is an important element in the successful implementation of the Summit goals. In this context, we are pleased to note that in his reform proposals the Secretary-General has emphasized the importance to be given to the development activities of the United Nations system. We hope that the process of consolidating economic and social development activities will contribute significantly to the realization of the goal of social and people-centred sustainable development.

The scourge of poverty that tragically afflicts an overwhelming proportion of the world's population continues to arrest the attainment of social development and social justice. Poverty eradication is a complex challenge, but one on which we must continue to focus our attention. Our collective commitment to alleviate and ultimately eradicate poverty must be sustained and consolidated in concrete, durable and integrated policies for sustainable development. As Malta stated during the recent general debate in the Assembly:

> "It is time to act firmly and unequivocally to halt the aggravation of this situation, which is fast becoming a latent source of political instability in the world." [*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Plenary Meetings*, 13th meeting, p. 9]

In addressing the issue of social and economic development, we cannot lose sight of the human dimension. A nation's potential to develop cannot be fully or only realized by economic growth alone. Quality of life is not solely dependent on a nation's economic wealth.

The human-development approach to addressing cross-cutting socio-economic problems has been emphasized time and again. This human-development perspective focuses on the concepts of participation, empowerment and solidarity. Partnership between public and non-governmental sectors of society is also a key element in socio-economic growth and development.

Malta firmly believes that the human being is central to any development strategy. This implies that people cannot be denied the right to live in freedom and dignity. The well-being of the individual must therefore be a well-defined target.

Targeting policies at the most vulnerable groups of society — children, women, the elderly, the disadvantaged, the poor, the disabled — is, moreover, a prerequisite for the successful realization of social justice, equity and respect for human dignity. In this context, we look forward to the forthcoming session of the Commission for Social Development, on which Malta is honoured to serve, which will address the priority theme of promoting the social integration and participation of all people, including disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and persons. We also attach great importance to the outcome of the World Conference of Ministers for Youth, to be held in Lisbon, as well as the 1999 International Year of Older Persons, which will promote the theme of a society for all ages.

Malta believes that quality of opportunity for all citizens in all spheres of human activity must be the starting point of any political strategy for the future. The vision guiding my Government in the formulation and implementation of its economic and social policies is one that emphasizes the need for a social security system which provides citizens with an effective say in exercising their social rights. Social policy is kept in line with policies in the fields of education, health, care of the elderly and housing. Social justice is guaranteed by giving particular attention to the more vulnerable or marginalized members of society.

Legislation ensures employment, education, health and other social benefits without any discrimination on the basis of gender or disability. Special attention is accorded to the elderly, to single-parent families, to those serving or who have served a prison sentence and their families, and to rehabilitated drug abusers. Programmes of coordination and initiatives aimed at offering the best possibility to people with special needs are also a priority concern.

My Government is also committed to allowing space for our youth to attain a pre-eminent role in society. The participation of young people in decision-making and in current social values should be increased through participation in entities involved in the social and economic running of the country.

The challenge of securing a world free from deprivation and marginalization must remain paramount to our Organization. The priorities and objectives identified at Copenhagen require holistic strategies underpinned by a spirit of cooperation, solidarity, dialogue and partnership within and among nations and regions. Through a concerted mobilization of political will and resources, through multilateral and bilateral assistance, a difference can surely be made.

Mr. Sharma (India): A few days ago in the Third Committee, we had the privilege of a highly stimulating and thought-provoking introduction by Mr. Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for the newly constituted Department of Economic and Social Affairs, on the basic issues bearing on economic and social development facing the international community at the present juncture. The issues he articulated — the imperative of development cooperation based on common concerns; shared values; solidarity and responsibility to each other; the need for more resolute action at the international level to address the problem of widening global inequalities and marginalization — are issues that require broad debate.

As stated in the Copenhagen Programme of Action:

> "in a world of increasing globalization and interdependence among countries, national efforts need to be buttressed by international cooperation". [*A/CONF.166/9*, para. 42]

For a large number of developing countries, the core issues of poverty eradication, productive employment and social integration cannot be addressed credibly without adequate resources, non-discriminatory access to markets and availability of relevant technologies. The question of constraints of available resources at the national level cannot be ignored. Social development requires investments. At low per capita income levels, even with the best political will and expenditure policies, sufficient resources cannot be mobilized for all the programmes outlined at the Summit. The domestic resources needed for social development can be mobilized only if the economy is growing rapidly.

But the issue is not merely one of resources. It is also a question of structural changes which integrate the social dimension — poverty eradication, gender mainstreaming, employment, social inclusion — into the main framework of policy. Without a supportive external economic environment that includes cooperation in the formulation and implementation of macroeconomic policies, trade liberalization, mobilization of new and additional financial resources, financial stability, more equitable access of developing countries to global markets, and productive investment in technologies, our efforts would be akin to trying to roll uphill. In the context of our statement on the world economic situation in the Second Committee earlier this week, our delegation had occasion to refer to a paradox according to which, while significant parts of the developing world are increasingly emerging as locomotives of world growth, this has not been adequately reflected in their enhanced participation in rule-setting or decision-making processes.

The priority theme for 1997 in the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development is productive employment and sustainable livelihoods. The thirty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development, which debated this subject earlier this year, had the benefit of a comprehensive paper prepared by the International Labour Organization on the subject. The report touched on the centrality of employment in policy formulation, including a broader recognition of work and employment; improving access to productive resources and infrastructure; and enhanced quality of work and employment. On that occasion, we pointed out that the elaboration of global concepts and categories in use in the sphere of social development in general, and in the subject of employment, unemployment, underemployment and productive livelihoods in particular, needed to appreciate better the diversity of economic circumstances in different parts of the world, the differences between circumstances in the developed and developing world, and the variety of responses possible. While broad concepts are valid, important differences in the details have significant policy implications.

For example, there is a general understanding that poverty is related to unemployment. While it is true that there is a close correlation between the two, statistics of unemployment or underemployment can often reveal or conceal crucial variations. In India, for example, where the overwhelming proportion of the work force is engaged in the unorganized or informal sector — which should not be confused with the illegal sector, as has sometimes been done — the extent of unemployment or underemployment measured by the criterion of time spent at work is relatively low. An unemployment rate of approximately 2 per cent and an underemployment rate of approximately 3 to 4 per cent may exist along with an incidence of poverty ranging between 30 to 40 per cent.

A recognition of this idea has profound implications for policy formulation. The concept of employment has been dominated by the image of the formal or organized sector with a concomitant accent on quality of work and employment. However, in many developing countries the formal or organized sector is less important than the informal or unorganized sector, and its potential for growth is under-exploited. In fact, the informal sector can often be an area of economic dynamism and growth. For example, in India liberalization and market-led growth has resulted in an increase in the proportion of casual labour in the labour market, parallel with an annual growth rate of over 6 per cent and expanding work availability.

What such paradoxical figures point to are really two broad realities. The first is the key role of the self-employed, who constitute an overwhelmingly large proportion of this informal sector. In the face of such vast numbers in the category of self-employed and in the informal sector, concepts of job security or employability security and even labour standards appear less relevant than the question of livelihood security.

The fundamental challenge of unemployment cannot be met by the formal sector alone. Employment generation needs to be developed hand in hand with generation of livelihood. For large sections in search of employment, self-employment opportunities need to be expanded. Livelihood security can be improved only by improving the overall environment in which self-employment — which in turn can become a building block for entrepreneurship and for the development of the formal sector — can flourish.

An enabling environment that can provide self-employment and livelihood security requires access to basic infrastructure, credit, technology and training. Above all, they need supportive rules and regulations, and also public expenditure on health, education, basic minimum needs and services and a stable and growing market. Labour standards apply more meaningfully in a relationship between employers and employees than among the self-employed.

The disjunction between low measurable levels of unemployment and a high incidence of poverty also points to the fact that very often the major cause of poverty has more to do with low productivity and low income from what is produced. Strategies that focus on expanding work opportunities while raising productivity and incomes can play a formidable role in meeting the challenge of eradicating poverty and unemployment in developing countries. This can be done through raising agricultural productivity and providing a favourable environment for the informal sector. An important strategy in this connection is to encourage social mobilization processes, organizing people in small self-help groups and encouraging group activities with the active involvement of non-governmental organizations and necessary support structures. Such cooperative structures can also overcome problems of scale, as well as provide access to credit and markets.

The example of the Self-Employed Women's Association, or SEWA — an acronym meaning service — and many others in India and South Asia which have brought together poor and often illiterate women in a network of cooperative employment, shows that self-help groups of women supported by non-governmental organizations have been found to be particularly successful in this regard. Supporting such groups through micro-credit and other schemes can address issues of feminization of poverty and women's economic empowerment, besides broader concerns of the eradication of poverty and unemployment and the provision of food security and basic social services.

Raising the productivity of agricultural labour is of particular importance to developing countries. Both the 1997 *Human Development Report* and the 1997 United Nations Conference on Trade and Development report *Least Developed Countries* have dwelt on the need to prioritize the agricultural sector — which constitutes the most important economic activity in most developing countries including the least developed countries — in order to increase productivity and income, reduce poverty, expand markets and stimulate the agro-processing industry, which could in turn enhance employment opportunities in both urban and rural areas, and on which social development is also crucially dependent. The reports also highlight how enhancing the efficiency of the agricultural sector could be a prelude to greater industrialization in Africa and the least developed countries, as has been the case in the more advanced developing countries of Asia. India has always been prepared to share its experiences of the Green Revolution with the countries of the developing world, in particular those in Africa, the least developed countries and small island developing countries.

India is about to embark on its ninth Five-Year Plan. The new Plan gives the highest priority to attaining full employment and eradicating poverty. While India is forging ahead with its policy of economic reform and liberalization, public policy is being re-oriented towards

supporting agricultural growth, building up infrastructure and ensuring universal access to basic minimum services like health, education, drinking water, food and nutrition, shelter and so on.

Our strategy for achieving these goals is based on a people-centred approach that attempts to strengthen participation at the grass roots level by providing for decentralized, participatory, village-level democratic institutions with statutory representation for women and socially disadvantaged groups of people. It is our resolve to place the concerns of gender, the rights and interests of the child, and the potential of the girl child and of youth, at the centre of all our decision-making. Indeed, the Plan will give special emphasis to creating equal opportunities for women and also to other socially disadvantaged or economically vulnerable categories or groups. Affirmative action and encouragement and support for non-governmental organizations form key components of this strategy.

To conclude, the short history of the world since the end of Second World War alone has seen dramatic changes in developmental models. The paradigms of development that placed the State at the centre have retreated. There is now a tendency to put an unfettered market system alone at the centre of the new orthodoxy of things. Internationalism has given way to globalization. The prevailing ethic propounds a retreat of the State from the economy. Yet the responsibility for social development must, of necessity, fall on the State.

There is at the same time a recognition of the need for approaches that blend social justice with economic growth and the imperatives of the market with social and environmental concerns. Neither the State nor the market merit paramountcy over people. And it is to this centrality of people in the development process, and the circumstances of people in developing countries in particular, that our delegation would like to see greater sensitivity.

Mr. Gorita (Romania): My country subscribes to the statement made today by the delegation of Luxembourg on behalf of the European Union. I will focus, therefore, on certain specific issues.

The World Summit for Social Development — organized two years ago in a post-cold-war international environment characterized by profound social, economic and political changes and increasing globalization — represented a milestone in the history of international cooperation. It provided a coherent vision of the multidimensional nature of social reality and emphasized the interdependence between social development, economic growth and environmental protection as mutually reinforcing facets of sustainable development.

The generous principles and values furthered by the Social Summit, which placed the human dimension at the centre of socio-economic debates and highlighted the importance of international responsibility and solidarity, enjoyed a strong political commitment on the part of the United Nations Member States.

Romania welcomes the progress achieved so far at the national and international levels in the follow-up process, as noted in the current report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit. We share the view that while Governments bear the primary responsibility in translating into facts the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, all actors of civil society should also participate in different stages of policy formulation and implementation. At the same time, it is essential that these national strategies for social development continue to be supported through cooperation with the United Nations and other multilateral institutions. Likewise, ensuring an adequate mobilization of financial resources remains an important prerequisite for attaining the goals of the Copenhagen Summit.

I should like to refer briefly to the functioning of the United Nations follow-up trilateral mechanism, which comprises the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission for Social Development — and in particular to the latter component.

Romania deems it necessary that this mechanism continue its efforts to integrate and coordinate the implementation of the Social Summit with the follow-up of other major conferences by enhancing cooperation among intergovernmental bodies, the relevant departments of the United Nations Secretariat and United Nations funds and programmes. We believe that the Economic and Social Council can play an increased role to this effect by further strengthening its function of coordination and facilitating the dialogue of Governments with civil society and United Nations agencies.

As for the Commission for Social Development, recognized as the functional body entrusted with the primary responsibility for the follow-up to the Summit, it has proceeded, through a restructured agenda,

systematically to review the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments based on the three core themes of poverty alleviation, employment and social integration. At its thirty-fifth session, held last March and which I had the honour to chair, the Commission considered the priority theme of productive employment and sustainable livelihood. A set of agreed conclusions on this topic was adopted by the Commission as a result of the strenuous efforts of all delegations, the effective support of the Division for Social Policy and Development and the valuable contribution of the International Labour Organization. This document, which emphasizes that the objectives of full employment and higher rates of productive employment are essential for eradicating poverty and ensuring social equity and cohesion, contains useful references for Governments in their endeavours to put into practice the Copenhagen outcome.

Social development has consistently been a priority for Romania. Over the past years, Romanian social policies have been pursued in the context of the profound democratic transformations which have taken place in my country. Likewise, in keeping with a modern, integrated concept, the Romanian Government has approached social issues in close relation with economic growth and the complex factors involved in sustainable human development.

The Declaration and Programme of Action of the Social Summit have provided the basis for the further review and development of social strategies and laws in Romania. Since the Copenhagen Summit, Romania has reinforced its activities aimed at raising living standards, alleviating poverty and enhancing social integration, mainly for the most vulnerable groups. Moreover, particular attention has been paid to improving employment in general, providing higher labour productivity and competitiveness, and encouraging job creation.

An important objective of my Government's policy is at present targeted towards modernizing the employment-related legislative and institutional framework. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that the law on the protection of the unemployed has recently been amended. Furthermore, the setting up of two specialized institutions — the National Employment Agency and the National Training Board — is well under way. These will operate on the basis of social partnership and will design and implement policies relating to the labour market, to the social protection of the unemployed and to professional redirection. This project is being carried out with the support of the World Bank.

In the context of speeding up economic reform and privatization in Romania, an extensive programme on labour force redistribution is being drafted in order to lower the social costs of reform. It provides for, *inter alia*, the creation of focal points for employment consulting and support in the restructured enterprises. In addition, technical and financial assistance projects, including for vocational training, will be implemented to benefit local communities with high rates of unemployment. All of these projects attach special importance to youth training and access to jobs. Likewise, specific arrangements have been made for encouraging employers to hire young graduates.

Bearing in mind the impact of social development issues on young people and the fact that they are the key agents for social change, I should like to take this opportunity to welcome the initiative of Portugal to organize a 1998 world conference of Ministers responsible for youth, in cooperation with the United Nations. I should also like to express my country's wish to participate actively in its preparation and proceedings.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.